Graham Greene

England Made Me

Michael York is Anthony in the Atlantic Productions Film

PENGUIN BOOKS

ENGLAND MADE ME

Graham Greene was born in 1904 and educated at Berkhamsted School, where his father was the headmaster. On coming down from Balliol College, Oxford, where he published a book of verse, he worked for four years as a sub-editor on *The Times*. He established his reputation with his fourth novel, *Stamboul Train*, which he classed as an 'entertainment' in order to distinguish it from more serious work. In 1935 he made a journey across Liberia, described in *Journey Without Maps*, and on his return was appointed film critic of the *Spectator*. In 1926 he had been received into the Roman Catholic Church and was commissioned to visit Mexico in 1938 and report on the religious persecution there. As a result he wrote *The Lawless Roads* and, later, *The Power and the Glory*.

Brighton Rock was published in 1938 and in 1940 he became literary editor of the *Spectator*. The next year he undertook work for the Foreign Office and was sent out to Sierra Leone in 1941–3. One of his major post-war novels, *The Heart of the Matter*, is set in West Africa and is considered by many to be his finest book. This was followed by *The End of the Affair*, *The Quiet American*, a story set in Vietnam, *Our Man in Havana*, and *A Burnt-Out Case*. His other novels include *The Comedians* and *Travels With My Aunt*, and in 1967 he published a collection of short stories under the title: *May We Borrow Your Husband?* His autobiography, *A Sort of Life*, was published in 1971. Among his more recent publications are *The Pleasure Dome* (1972), *The Honorary Consul* (1973), and *An Impossible Woman: The Memories of Dottoressa Moor of Capri* (1975), which he edited.

In all, Graham Greene has written some thirty novels, 'entertainments', plays, children's books, travel books, and collections of essays and short stories. He was made a Companion of Honour in 1966.

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TO VIVIEN

WITH TEN YEARS' LOVE

1925–1935

'All the world owes me a living.'

–WALT DISNEY

(The Grasshopper and the Ants)

None of the characters in this book is intended to be that of a living person

PART I

1

SHE might have been waiting for her lover. For three quarters of an hour she had sat on the same high stool, half turned from the counter, watching the swing door. Behind her the ham sandwiches were piled under a glass dome, the urns gently steamed. As the door swung open, the smoke of engines silted in, grit on the skin and like copper on the tongue.

'Another gin.' It was her third. Damn him, she thought with tenderness, I'm hungry. She swallowed it at a draught, as she was used to drinking schnaps; *skål, skål,* but there was no one to *skål.* The man in the bowler hat put his foot on the brass rail, leant his elbow on the counter, drank his bitter, talked, drank his bitter, wiped his moustache, talked, kept his eye on her.

She stared out past the dusty door pane into the noisy dark. Sparks leapt in the thick enclosed air and went out, sparks from engines, sparks from cigarettes, sparks from the trolley wheels beating on the asphalt. An old tired woman swung the door and peered in; she was looking for someone who was not there.

She moved from her stool; the man in the bowler hat watched her, the waitresses paused in their drying and watched her. Their thoughts drummed on her back: Is she giving him up? What's he like, I wonder? Jilted? She stood in the doorway and let them think: the deep silence of their concentration amused her. She watched the blue empty rails in front of her, looked up the platform to the lights and the bookstalls, then she turned and went back to her stool and was aware of their thoughts wilting again in the steaming air round the urns; the waitresses dried glasses, the man in the bowler hat drank his bitter.

'It never rains but it pours. Take silk stockings for example.'

'Another gin.' But she left the glass on the counter, after barely touching it this time with her lips, and began hurriedly

to make-up, as if it had been a duty she had been too excited to remember. Now, in the deep conviction that he would not come, she had one lonely hour to remember in all the things she had neglected: mouth, nose, cheeks, eyebrows. 'Oh damn,' she said. The pencil snapped, and she ground the charcoal end into the floor with her toe; 'Oh damn,' she said, caring not a hang that she was surrounded again by curiosity, alien and unfriendly. It was as if she had broken a mirror; it was unlucky; it was inefficient. Her self-confidence was shaken. She began to wonder if she would recognise her brother if, after all, he came.

But she knew him at once by the small scar under the left eye, the round face which had always looked as if only that day it had lost its freshness, like a worn child's, the bonhomie which even a stranger would not trust. 'Kate,' he was all contrition, 'I'm sorry I'm late. It wasn't my fault. The fact is –' and at once he became sullen, prepared not to be believed. And why, she thought, as she kissed him and touched his back to assure herself that he was there, that he had really come, that they were together, should anyone believe him? He can't open his mouth without lying.

'Have this gin?' She watched him drink it slowly and was aware how her own brain recorded unerringly his anxiety.

'You haven't changed.'

'You have,' he said. 'You're prettier than ever, Kate,' and charm, she thought, charm, your damnable accommodating charm. 'Prosperity suits you.' She watched him more closely and examined his clothes for any sign that the years had been less prosperous for him. But he always possessed one good suit. Tall and broad and thin and a little worn, with the scar under his lower lid, he was the mark of every waitress in the room. 'A bitter, please,' and a waitress tore along the counter to serve him, and Kate watched the automatic charm glint in his eye.

'Where shall we eat? Where are your bags?' He turned cautiously from the counter and one hand straightened his school tie.

'The fact is –' he said.

'You aren't coming with me,' she said with hopeless cer-

tainty. She wondered for a moment at the depth of her disappointment, for he belonged to this place, to the smoke swirling beyond the door, to the stale beer, to 'Guinness is good for you' and 'Try a Worthington', he had the bold approach, the shallow cheer of an advertisement.

'How did you know?'

'Oh, I always know.' It was true, she always knew; she was his elder by half an hour; she had, she sometimes thought with a sense of shame, by so little outstripped him in the pursuit of the more masculine virtues, reliability, efficiency, and left him with what would have served most women better, his charm. 'They aren't going to give you the Stockholm job then?'

He beamed at her; he rested both hands (she noticed his gloves needed cleaning) on the top of his umbrella, leant back against the counter and beamed at her. Congratulate me, he seemed to be saying, and his humorous friendly shifty eyes raked her like the headlamps of a second-hand car which had been painted and polished to deceive. He would have convinced anyone but her that for once he had done something supremely clever.

'I've resigned.'

But she had heard that tale too often; it had been the yearly fatal drumming in their father's ears which helped to kill him. He had not been able to answer a telephone without anxiety – 'I have resigned', 'I have resigned', proudly as if it had been matter for congratulation – and afterwards the cables from the East tremblingly opened. 'I have resigned' from Shanghai, 'I have resigned' from Bangkok, 'I have resigned' from Aden, creeping remorselessly nearer. Their father had believed to the end the literal truth of those cables, signed even to relatives with faint grandiloquence in full, 'Anthony Farrant'. But Kate had always known too much; to her these messages conveyed – 'Sacked. I am sacked. Sacked.'

'Come outside,' she said. It would have been unfair to humiliate him before the waitresses. Again she was aware of the deep listening silence, of eyes watching them go. At the far end of the platform she began to question him. 'How much money have you got?'

'Not a sou,' he said.

'But surely you've got a week's pay. You gave them a week's notice.'

'As a matter of fact,' he said, striking an attitude against his smoky metallic background, against a green signal lamp burning for the East Coast express, 'I left at once. Really, it was an affair of honour. You wouldn't be able to understand.'

'Perhaps not.'

'Besides, my landlady will give me tick until I'm in funds again.'

'And how long will that be?'

'Oh, I'll get hold of something in a week.' His courage would have been admirable if it had not been so feckless. Money, he had always been certain, would turn up, and it always did: a fellow he'd known at school noticed his tie in the street, stopped him, gave him a job; he sold vacuum cleaners to his relations; he was quite capable of selling a gold brick to an Australian in the Strand; at the worst there had always been his father.

'You forget. Father's dead.'

'What do you mean? I'm not going to sponge.' He believed quite sincerely that he had never 'sponged'. He had borrowed, of course; his debts to relatives must by now have almost reached the thousand mark; but they remained debts not gifts, one day, when a scheme of his succeeded, to be repaid. While Kate waited for the express to pass and shielded her face from the smoke, she remembered a few of his schemes: his plan to buy up old library novels and sell them in country villages, his great packing idea (a shop which would pack and post your Christmas parcels at a charge of twopence a parcel), the patent hand warmer (a stick of burning charcoal in the hollow handle of an umbrella). They had always sounded plausible when he described them; they had no obvious faults, except the one fatal flaw that he was concerned in them. 'I only want capital,' he would explain with a brightness which was never dulled by the knowledge that no one would ever trust him with more than five pounds. Then he would embark on them without capital; strange visitors would appear at week-ends, men older than himself with the same school ties, the same air of bright vigour, but in their cases distinctly

tarnished. Then the affair would be wound up, and astonishingly it appeared from the long and complicated pages of accounts that he had not lost more money than he had borrowed. 'If I had had proper capital,' he would explain, but he blamed no one, and no one was paid back. He had added to his debts, but he had not 'sponged'.

His face, she thought, is astonishingly young for thirty-three; it is a little worn, but only as if by a wintry day, it is no more mature than when he was a schoolboy. He might be a schoolboy now, returned from a rather cold and wearing football match. His appearance irritated her, for a man should grow up, but before she could speak and tell him what she thought, her tenderness woke again for his absurd innocence. For he was hopelessly lost in the world of business that she knew so well, the world where she was at home: he had a child's cunning in a world of cunning men: he was dishonest, but he was not dishonest enough. She was aware, having shared his thoughts for more than thirty years, felt his fears beat in her own body, of his incalculable reserves. There were things he would not do. That, she told herself, was the amazing difference between them.

'Listen,' she said. 'I can't leave you here without money. You're coming with me. Erik will give you a job.'

'I can't speak the language. And anyhow,' he leant forward on his stick and smiled with as much negligence as if he had a thousand pounds in the bank, 'I don't like foreigners.'

'My dear,' she said with irritation, 'you're out of date. There are no foreigners in a business like Krogh's; we're internationalists there, we haven't a country. We aren't a little dusty City office which has been in the family for two hundred years.'

There were times when he did seem to share her intuition, to catch directly the sharp glitter of her meaning. 'Ah, but darling,' he said, 'perhaps that's where I belong. I'm dusty too,' he remarked, standing there with uncertain urbanity, with an uneasy smile, in his smart, his one good suit, 'And besides, I haven't a single reference.'

'You said you had resigned.'

'Well, it wasn't quite like that.'

'Don't I know it.' They stepped back to let a trolley pass. 'I'm damned hungry,' he said. 'Could you lend me five bob?'

'You're coming with me,' she repeated. 'Erik will give you a job. Have you got your passport?'

'It's at my digs.'

'We'll fetch it.' The lights of an incoming train beat against his face, and she could watch with hard decided tenderness his hesitation and his fear. She was certain that if he had not been hungry, if he had not been without five shillings in his pocket, he would have refused. For he was right when he remarked that he was dusty too: the grit of London lay under his eyes, he was at home in this swirl of smoke and steam, at the marble-topped tables, chaffing in front of the beer handles, he was at home in the one-night hotels, in the basement offices, among the small crooked flotations of transient businesses, jovial among the share pushers. She thought: If I had not met Erik, I should have been as dusty too. 'We'll find a taxi,' she said.

He stared through the window at the bicycle shops of the Euston Road; in the electric light behind the motor horns, behind the spokes and the tins of liquid rubber, autumn glimmered, lapsed into winter as the lights were put out and the bicycles were taken in for the night. 'Oh,' he sighed, 'it's good, isn't it?' Autumn was the few leaves drifted from God knows where upon the pavement by Warren Street tube, the lamplight on the wet asphalt, the gleam of cheap port in the glasses held by old women in the Ladies' Bar. 'London,' he said, 'there's nothing like it.' He leant his face against the glass. 'Dash it all, Kate, I don't want to go.'

He had used the one phrase which told her the real extent of his emotion. 'Dash it all, Kate.' She remembered a dark barn and the moon behind the stacks and her brother with his school cap crumpled in his hands. They had as many memories in common as an old couple celebrating their thirtieth anniversary. 'You've got to go,' and she watched him out of sight before she made her own way back to her school, the waiting mistress, the two hours' questioning, and the reports.

'You've got to come.'

'Of course you know best,' Anthony said. 'You always have. I was just remembering that time we met in the barn.' And certainly, she thought with surprise, he sometimes has his intuitions too. 'I'd written to you that I was running away, and we met, do you remember, half-way between our schools? It was about two o'clock in the morning. You sent me back.'

'Wasn't I right?'

'Oh yes,' he said, 'of course you were right,' and turned towards her eyes so blank that she wondered whether he had heard her question. They were as blank as the end pages of a book hurriedly turned to hide something too tragic or too questionable on the last leaf.

'Here you are,' he said, 'welcome to my humble abode.' She winced at his mechanical jollity, which was not humble nor welcoming, but the recited first lesson in a salesman's school. When the landlady smiled at them and told him in a penetrating whisper that he would not be disturbed, she began to realize what life had done to him since she had seen him last.

'Have you got a shilling for the meter?'

'It's not worth while,' she said. 'We aren't going to stay. Where are your bags?'

'As a matter of fact I popped 'em yesterday.'

'It doesn't matter. We can buy you something on the way to the station.'

'The shops'll be closed.'

'Then you'll have to sleep in your clothes. Where's your passport?'

'In a drawer. I shan't be a moment. Take a seat on the bed, Kate.' Where she sat she could see on the table a cheap framed photograph: *'With love from Annette.'*

'Who's that, Tony?'

'Annette? She was a sweet kid. I think I'll take it with me.' He began to rip open the back of the frame.

'Leave her here. You'll find plenty like her in Stockholm.'

He stared at the small hard enamelled face. 'She was the goods, Kate.'

'Is this her scent on the pillow?'

'Oh no. No. That wouldn't be hers. She hasn't been here for a long time now. I haven't had any money, and the kid's

got to live. God knows where she is now. She's left her digs. I tried there yesterday.'

'After you'd sold your bags?'

'Yes. But you know when you once lose sight of a girl like that, she's gone. You never see her again. It's odd when you've known a girl so well, been fond of each other, seen her only a month ago, not to know where she is, whether she's alive or dead or dying.'

'Then that other's the scent?'

'Yes,' he said, 'that other's the scent.'

'She's old, isn't she?'

'She's over forty.'

'Plenty of money, I suppose?'

'Oh, she's rich enough,' Anthony said. He picked up the second photograph and laughed without much amusement. 'We're a pair, aren't we, you and Krogh and me and Maud.' She didn't answer, watching him stoop again to find his passport, noticing how broad he had become since she had seen him last. She remembered the waitresses staring over the dishcloths, the silence which surrounded their talk. It seemed odd to her that he should need to buy a girl. But when he turned, his smile explained everything; he carried it always with him as a leper carried his bell; it was a perpetual warning that he was not to be trusted.

'Well. Here it is. But will he give me a job?'

'Yes.'

'I'm not so bright.'

'You needn't tell me,' she said, sounding for the first time the whole depth of her sad affection, 'what you are.'

'Kate,' he said, 'it sounds silly, but I'm a bit scared.' He dropped the passport on the bed and sat down. 'I don't want any more new faces. I've had enough of them.' She could see them crowding up behind his eyes: the men at the club, the men in liners, the men on polo ponies, the men behind glass doors. 'Kate,' he said, 'you'll stick to me?'

'Of course,' she said. There was nothing easier to promise. She could not rid herself of him. He was more than her brother; he was the ghost that warned her, look what you have escaped; he was all the experience she had missed; he

was pain, because she had never felt pain except through him, for the same reason he was fear, despair, disgrace. He was everything except success.

'If only you could stay with me here.' 'Here' was the twin dials on the gas-meter, the dirty pane, the long-leaved plant, the paper fan in the empty fireplace; 'here' was the scented pillow, the familiar photographs, the pawned bags, the empty pockets, home.

She said: 'I can't leave Krogh's.'

'He'll give you a job in London.'

'No, he wouldn't. He needs me there.' And 'there' was the glassy cleanliness, the latest fashionable sculpture, the soundproof floors and dictaphones and pewter ash-trays and Erik in his silent room listening to the reports from Warsaw, Amsterdam, Paris and Berlin.

'Well, I'll come. He's got the brass, hasn't he?'

'Oh, yes,' she said. 'He's got the brass.'

'And there'll be pickings for yours truly?'

'Yes, there'll be pickings.'

He laughed. He had forgotten already the new faces he feared. He put on his hat and looked in the mirror and adjusted the handkerchief in his breast-pocket. 'What a pair we are.' She could have sung with joy, when he pulled her to her feet, because they were a pair again, if she had not been daunted at the sight of him in his suspect smartness, his depraved innocence, hopelessly unprepared in his old school tie.

'What is that tie?' she asked. 'Surely it's not ...'

'No, no,' he said, flashing the truth at her so unexpectedly that she was caught a victim to the charm she hated. 'I've promoted myself. It's Harrow.'

2

The fellows asked me to have another whisky. They all wanted to hear what I'd seen. For weeks before they had scarcely spoken a word to me, said I was lucky not to be turned out of the club, for claiming a military rank, they told me, to which I wasn't entitled. The sun beat down on the pavement outside, and a beggar lay in a patch of shadow and licked his hands; I

can't think to this day why he licked his hands. The captains brought me another drink and the majors drew up their chairs and the colonels told me to take my time. The generals weren't there, they were probably asleep in their offices, because it was about noon. They forgot I wasn't really a captain, we were all commercials together.

A fishing boat rocking on the swell with a yellow light a man's height upon the mast, and a man kneeling and pulling at a bundle of nets in the pale light, with the sea and the dark all round him and we passing all lit up and a gramophone playing.

I told the fellows at the club how I was on the pavement when the coolie threw the bomb. A cart had broken down and the Minister's car pulled up and the coolie threw the bomb, but of course, I hadn't seen it, I'd only heard the noise over the roofs and seen the screens tremble. I wanted to discover how many whiskies they'd pay for. I was tired of being left out of every bridge four; I didn't know where to turn for a little cash. So I said I was badly shaken and they paid for three whiskies and we played cards and I won over two pounds before Major Wilber came in, who knew I had not been there.

Smell of whisky from the smoking-room, touch of salt on the lips. The gramophone playing, new faces.

So I went on to Aden.

Skinning a rabbit among the gorse bushes on the common, I shut my eyes for a moment and the knife slipped up through a fold of skin and stabbed me under the eye. They told me over and over again that I ought to have cut downwards, as if I hadn't known it all the time, and they thought I would lose my sight on that side. I was frightened and Father was ill and Kate came. Pale-green dormitory walls and the cracked bell ringing for tea, my face bandaged and I listening to the feet on the stone stairs going down to tea. I could hear how many waited by the matron's room for eggs marked on the shell with their names in indelible pencil, and the cracked bell ringing again before the boot-boy put his hand on the slapper. And then silence, like heaven, and I was alone until Kate came.

The man ran along the roofs and they shot at him from the street and from the windows. He dodged behind the chimney-